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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 SANTO DOMINGO 005127

SIPDIS

FOR: OIG, WHA/CAR-SEARBY WHA/EX ONLY

E.O.12958 N/A

TAGS: [ASIG](#) [DR](#)

SUBJECT: COMPLIANCE WITH OIG RECOMMENDATIONS, 2005

1. Following reports on follow-up actions taken to comply with the formal recommendations made by the OIG team that inspected Embassy Santo Domingo this year.

2. Recommendation 1: Embassy Santo Domingo should develop a strategy for implementing a program to eliminate or reduce the discrimination now encountered by some African American employees who are denied entry to some private entertainment establishments in the Dominican Republic. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo/DCM/MGT)

RESPONSE: Post Management has implemented a comprehensive strategy to reduce discrimination now encountered by some African American employees who are denied entry to some private entertainment establishments in the Dominican Republic. Post has held several meetings with the African American community at post to discuss their concerns. The DCM and emboffs visited several Clubs that had been singled out as discriminatory and spoken to the owners to express our concern and clarify that their policies were not to discriminate. The Ambassador and/or DCM discussed our concerns with senior Dominican government and business figures and explained the negative impact that discrimination would have for the Dominican Republic. Ecopol has continued to address race issues in our submission to the State Department's annual human rights report. For our Mission staff specifically, the DCM has spoken with the headmaster of the school that most Mission children attend to encourage the school to develop diversity awareness among its students. Post has also strengthened the briefing that we give to all newcomers on race issues in the Dominican Republic and added wording to the Post Profile to warn of the issue. Post management plans to continue attention and activities related to this issue.

3. Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Human Resources should establish, well in advance to final assignment, a briefing program that fully apprises prospective African American employees of what they may encounter in the Dominican Republic. (Action: M/DGHR)

[RESPONSE: Action: M/DGHR.]

4. Recommendation 3: Embassy Santo Domingo should issue an administrative or management policy notice on Members of Household consistent with the latest Department policy on this issue. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

RESPONSE: In September, Post Management revised and issued a Mission Notice on Members of Household that brings post policy into line with current Department policy.

5. Recommendation 4: Embassy Santo Domingo should request funding from the Bureau of Consular Affairs to send two Foreign Service nationals, one from the immigrant visa unit and one from the nonimmigrant visa unit, to the call center in Mexico to assist in training operators on answering calls from Dominican citizens. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with CA)

RESPONSE: Embassy agrees with the recommendation. Embassy contacted CA/EX, and CA/EX also agrees with the recommendation. We plan to send the senior IV FSN and the senior NIV FSN to Mexico in early CY 2006.

6. Recommendation 5: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should request approval and funding from the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' consular improvement initiative fund to construct a facility in a section of the outside nonimmigrant visa waiting room to perform the fingerprint, facial recognition and nonimmigrant visa data-entry functions. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with CA and OBO)

RESPONSE: Embassy has inspected the NIV waiting room and concluded that a portion of the area could be utilized to build three new stand-alone fingerprint/biometric windows. Post has requested Department funding for the initiative and is awaiting final approval.

7. Recommendation 6: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs,

the Bureau of Human Resources and the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should request the assignment of an entry-level officer to the American citizens services unit. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with WHA, DGHR and CA)

RESPONSE: Prior to the OIG visit, Embassy had already requested a new entry-level officer position for the ACS Unit. Embassy reiterated this request to CA/EX in July 2005, and the request is currently pending.

18. Recommendation 7: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a locally employed staff position in the American citizens services unit. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)
RESPONSE: The Consular Section has discussed with the Embassy's HR office the need for a new FSN position in the ACS Unit. On August 22, 2005, the Consular Section submitted a memo to the Management Section requesting the establishment of the position. Once there is funding for the position, the Management Section will establish it. Then, the Consular Section will work with the local HR office to draft a position description and complete the additional steps needed to fill the position

19. Recommendation 8: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, the Bureau of Consular Affairs, and the Office of the Legal Adviser, should formally request the government of the Dominican Republic to enter into a prison transfer treaty relationship with the United States by acceding to either the Organization of American States prison transfer treaty or the Council of Europe prison transfer treaty, since the United States is party to both agreements. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with WHA, CA and L)

RESPONSE: The Departments of State and Justice have both repeatedly stated - and Embassy has reiterated to the governments of the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico - that any agreement between the United States and the Dominican Republic on prisoner transfers should come via the Dominican Republic's accession to one of the two already extant multilateral conventions (i.e., Inter-American or Council of Europe). The Embassy has sent a diplomatic note to the GODR urging accession to one of these two treaties.

10. Recommendation 9: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo, should decide whether the United States will recognize the Dominican Republic as a signatory to the Hague Convention for the Abduction of Children. (Action: CA, in coordination with Embassy Santo Domingo)

RESPONSE: In July 2005, Embassy again asked for the Office of Children's Issues (CI) to take action as soon as possible on the Dominican Republic's accession to the Hague Convention. Embassy repeated this request in August 2005, and will continue to follow up as necessary. Post understands that the GODR response to the Hague Permanent Bureau's questionnaire is pending with the Office of Translations for eventual review by L. Although there are other accession requests in the pipeline, CI has indicated that it will alert L that the Dominican Republic accession request is a priority. In the meantime, Embassy will provide updated information regarding GODR efforts to be in compliance with this treaty.

11. Recommendation 10: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, the Bureau of Human Resources and the Bureau of Consular Affairs should request an entry-level officer in the immigrant visa unit. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with WHA, DGHR, and CA)

RESPONSE: Embassy agrees with this recommendation, which tracks with our Consular Package and Mission Performance Plan submissions. Embassy contacted CA/EX in July 2005 to begin the process.

12. Recommendation 11: Embassy Santo Domingo should coordinate with the Kentucky consular center and the Bureau of Consular Affairs to ship 212(a)(4) refusal cases under the Immigration and Nationality Act, or cases that cannot overcome the public charge criteria of the Immigration and Nationality Act, to the Kentucky consular center for scanning and storage. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with KCC and CA)

RESPONSE: Embassy is currently in discussions with CA on possible implementation.

13. Recommendation 12: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a local housing assistant position in the general services housing office.

RESPONSE: The new position has been established and filled.

¶14. Recommendation 13: Embassy Santo Domingo should establish a local compensation and benefits position in the human resources unit. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo).

RESPONSE: A new position was authorized by the ICASS council. Interviews to fill the position are in process.

¶15. Recommendation 14: Embassy Santo Domingo should employ a contractor or a regional trainer to provide leadership, supervisory skills, performance evaluation, team building, and customer service training for mission employees. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

RESPONSE: Post arranged for FRC to provide leadership training to mission employees in October 2005, and is working with FSI for supervisory training in March or April of 06.

¶16. Recommendation 15: Embassy Santo Domingo should request from the Management Development Division of the Foreign Service Institute assistance and materials to hold a series of sessions on improving interpersonal skills, communication and team building.

RESPONSE: Post is in the process of identifying a local trainer who would be able to provide customer service and team building training in Spanish. The Management Counselor also held workshops on developing metrics to measure performance and customer service. Post is working with FSI to arrange communications and team building sessions in Santo Domingo.

¶17. Recommendation 16: Embassy Santo Domingo should submit data to the Department using the State Automated Federal Information Security Management Act Reporting Environment information tool as required by Department guidance. (Action: IMO)

RESPONSE: Post has reviewed its procedures to assure meeting SAFIRE reporting deadlines in the future. Post successfully met the March 2005 deadline for reporting security training data, as well as the June 2005 deadline for reporting security training data and completing its computer security self-assessment questionnaire.

¶18. Recommendation 17: Embassy Santo Domingo should develop and maintain a training program to keep information technology staff proficient and ensure the staff's technical skills are current. (Action: IMO)

RESPONSE: Post has identified, prioritized, and funded the appropriate technical training for our IRM staff.

¶19. Recommendation 18: Embassy Santo Domingo should request the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, to assign supervisory personnel in the information management office of the embassy to management training courses before arriving at post. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with WHA and IRM)

RESPONSE: Post has asked that WHA and IRM assure that our IMO personnel receive requisite supervisory training in advance of arrival at post.

¶20. Recommendation 19: Embassy Santo Domingo, in coordination with the employee association, should contract for a qualified food service vendor for the chancery and consulate buildings, with some attempt to provide reasonably priced options for all employees. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

RESPONSE: Embassy Santo Domingo, American Employee Recreational Association has contracted with a local vendor to provide food concession services to the Mission. The American Employee Recreational Association also signed a contract with a local firm which provides vending machine food and beverage service to the Mission and Post Management is in the process of remodeling the Embassy Cafeteria area the Rincon Verde as well. We expect the cafeteria to open by Christmas.

¶21. Recommendation 20: Embassy Santo Domingo should ensure that the recreation association board resolves all exceptions noted on its auditor management letters.

RESPONSE: This has been completed. All exceptions have been resolved. In addition, the AREA hired a manager to provide continuity.

¶22. Recommendation 21: Embassy Santo Domingo should conduct an embassy wide management controls review as described in 2 FAM 021. (Action: MGT)

RESPONSE: Embassy Santo Domingo held an embassy wide management controls meeting in September. A review

subsequent to the IG visit of May 2005 has been held to evaluate findings.

¶23. Recommendation 22: Embassy Santo Domingo should enroll all embassy managers with management control responsibilities in the Foreign Service Institute correspondence course for the Management Controls Workbook. (Action: DCM/MGT/HR)

RESPONSE: Post Management has arranged for FSI to conduct management controls training at post in February. In addition, Post Management has provided all embassy managers with management control responsibilities with information to allow them to sign up with the Foreign Service Institute for a correspondence course for the Management Controls Workbook.

¶24. Recommendation 23: Embassy Santo Domingo should implement a process for keeping cumulative running totals of machine-readable visa fees collected compared to nonimmigrant visa applications processed. (Action: Embassy Santo Domingo)

RESPONSE: As of July 2005, Post completes the Periodic Audit Form for NIV Processing Fees, in accordance with Chapter 700 of the Consular Management Handbook.

¶25. Recommendation 24: Embassy Santo Domingo should implement management control procedures to verify overtime requests for on call hours worked and require maintenance supervisors maintain a log of all emergency after hours calls. (Action: GSO)

RESPONSE: Post has implemented procedures to verify overtime requests. All emergency overtime is entered in a log that the Facility Manager and the Maintenance Engineer review every Monday morning.

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